



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports  
For Schools with Residential Provision**

**King's School, Rochester**

**January 2020**



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## School's Details

<b>School</b>	King's School, Rochester		
<b>DfE number</b>	887/6000		
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1084266		
<b>Address</b>	King's School, Rochester Satis House Boley Hill Rochester ME1 1TE		
<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 888555		
<b>Email address</b>	seniorschool@kings-rochester.co.uk		
<b>Principal</b>	Mr Ben Charles		
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Miss Jacqueline Shicluna		
<b>Age range</b>	13 to 18		
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	261		
	<b>Day pupils</b>	222	<b>Boarders</b> 39
	<b>Seniors</b>	166	<b>Sixth Form</b> 95
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21 to 23 January 2020		

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 King's School, Rochester can trace its origins back to the foundation of the Cathedral in 604 AD. It is now an independent co-educational day and boarding school comprising three sections. The school's principal is the headmaster of the senior school and delegates responsibility to the heads of the pre-preparatory and preparatory schools.
- 1.2 The school is a charitable trust overseen by a board of governors some of whom are on the cathedral staff. Since the previous inspection, the school has confirmed the appointment of a new chair of governors and appointed a bursar, a headmaster for the preparatory school and a principal who took up his post in April 2019. A new housemistress and housemaster have been appointed and a boarding house has been refurbished.
- 1.3 The school and boarding houses occupy buildings on an open campus adjacent to Rochester Cathedral.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to challenge each pupil to make the most of their academic and personal potential by developing an enquiring mind and a passion for learning and by developing their skills, qualities and interests through activities and opportunities beyond the classroom. It aims to be a nurturing community that develops values within the setting of Christianity.

### About the pupils

- 1.5 Most day pupils come from north Kent and are of British ethnicity; they are from a wide variety of backgrounds, reflecting the local area. The majority of boarders are from overseas and represent around twenty countries. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils in the senior school is above average and, in the sixth form, it is average in comparison to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 39 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia, dyspraxia and autistic spectrum disorders, 20 of whom receive specialist help. Two pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 25 pupils, 16 of whom are supported by specialist teaching. Data used by the school have identified 14 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, their needs are supported by a scholarship programme.

## 2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

### Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

This inspection also contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools ('boarding NMS'). It also comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and it judges the extent to which the school currently meets the boarding NMS. It identifies any standards which the school does not meet and requires action to meet them. Findings are distributed across sections relating to the eight Parts of the standards.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards, including the boarding NMS, may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

**This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards, including the boarding NMS.** The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as met or as not met. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management, together with the NMS covering the same areas. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#).

## Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015, and associated requirements and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

### PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 At GCSE in the years 2017 to 2019, performance has been above the national average for maintained schools.
- 2.3 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2017 to 2019 have been in line with or above the national average for sixth formers in maintained schools.
- 2.4 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

### PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.6 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. Boarders' views are actively encouraged, and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.7 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 17 and 19 are met.**

### PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.8 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.9 An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family and access to a programme of activities. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.
- 2.10 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996, and NMS 2–4, 6–12, 15 and 16 are met.**

#### **PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

- 2.11 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.
- 2.12 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 14 are met.**

#### **PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools**

- 2.13 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.
- 2.14 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 are met.**

#### **PART 6 – Provision of information**

- 2.15 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.
- 2.16 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are met.**

#### **PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled**

- 2.17 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.
- 2.18 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 are met.**

#### **PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

- 2.19 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils. Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.
- 2.20 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 13 are met.**

### 3. Educational Quality Inspection

#### Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

**The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.**

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
Remove	Year 9
Lower Fifth	Year 10
Upper Fifth	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

## Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- Pupils' attitudes to their studies are excellent and they readily take leadership in their own learning.
  - Pupils' communication skills are highly developed.
  - Pupils achieve high standards in a range of activities such as music and sport.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour and their moral understanding is excellent.
  - Pupils take responsibility for the decisions they have to make as they plan for the future.
  - Pupils are friendly and polite and treat all members of their school community with respect.
  - Pupils contribute positively to their school and to their local community.
  - Pupils develop an excellent spiritual understanding at school and strongly appreciate the importance of the non-material aspects of life.

## Recommendation

- 3.3 In the context of these excellent outcomes, the school may wish to consider the following:
- Enable pupils to make equally good progress in all their subjects.

## The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Pupils have excellent attitudes to their learning. They are highly motivated, well-organised and prepared to work hard, concentrating enthusiastically in most lessons. They seek help when necessary from their teachers in and out of the classroom, personally and by email, and many attend extra-curricular subject clinics, where teachers give their time to support their efforts. Pupils take full responsibility for their own learning, as was seen in a mathematics clinic where pupils had consulted together before providing their teacher with a full revision schedule.
- 3.6 Pupils work equally effectively with each other. When asked to work in groups almost all pupils remain focused on the task and help each other to complete it, for example in the boarding houses where older boarders often study together with younger pupils, helping them research and understand new topics. Examples of effective collaboration were seen in design technology (DT), where pupils discussed the different elements of a circuit board and reminded each other of the functions of each part, and in art, where pupils carefully reviewed each other's work in relation to the techniques used with acrylic paints. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are friendly and respectful and pupils enjoy working in the informal but purposeful atmosphere that most teaching creates. In a very small number of lessons, where this was lacking, a few pupils were less well-motivated, but most were still willing to work towards their goals.

- 3.7 Pupils develop excellent study skills as subject teachers give them techniques for learning. Younger pupils marking their own work in French, wrote down their corrections carefully so as to remember them for the future. Pupils interviewed during the inspection valued their personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons on revision and time management, saying they have learned to pace their time sensibly, to make revision plans and to write their own notes to help them remember key points. Boarders said that the regular evening prep sessions help them to develop good study habits. Pupils are confident in researching for projects in art and DT using online resources and the school's excellent library. They conduct research independently following their own interests and, in the sixth form, research widely for their extended project qualification (EPQ), analysing and synthesising their results to prove or disprove their hypotheses. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a very large majority of pupils said that the school encourages them to think and learn for themselves and inspection evidence confirms this view.
- 3.8 Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding were seen to progress rapidly. For example, in history, sixth-form pupils developed their understanding of the problems facing Harold Wilson as they discussed his time in government, and younger pupils debating freewill and determinism in religious studies (RS), built on each other's ideas when considering whether it is acceptable to punish individuals on the basis of what they might do in the future. Pupils quickly consolidate their knowledge and develop their understanding because the small class sizes enable all to participate and progress. Teachers know their pupils well and tailor the work to the individual. The school's leadership monitors teaching and learning effectively ensuring that the school meets its aims.
- 3.9 Pupils apply their knowledge appropriately. Sixth form chemists have an excellent understanding of the theories of rate reactions and they used this prior knowledge and their mathematical skills to work through challenging questions successfully, enjoying the satisfaction of solving a difficult problem. Younger pupils studying film music responded astutely to the challenge of composing a 45 second piece using technical terms such as pitch, rhythm, timbre and intonation with accuracy. Pupils respond readily to the high expectations of many of their teachers who do not set limits on pupils' achievement and constantly offer them high academic challenges in line with the school's aim to enable each pupil to make the most of their academic and personal potential. Pupils' excellent levels of skill are evident both in their work and in a variety of extra-curricular activities. Music is a strength, as evidenced by the exceptional level of performance that was enjoyed in assembly during the inspection. A number of pupils obtain excellent results in national music examinations with a number of gifted individuals being selected for the cathedral choir and for local and national youth choirs and orchestras. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a very large majority of pupils and their parents agreed that their teachers help them make progress and this increasing understanding was seen in lessons and work scrutiny throughout the school.
- 3.10 The school accepts pupils with a wide range of ability and most pupils make good progress during their time at school with many achieving excellent results in public examinations. GCSE and A-level results are above national norms, and, in many subjects, pupils attain grades considerably higher than their ability as measured on entry would suggest. In a very few subject areas pupils' progress has been less strong. Most pupils with EAL and SEND achieve as well as, or better than their peers, supported by effective specialist teaching, and, in 2019, all EAL pupils scored highly enough in their English language tests to go on to their chosen higher education courses. More able pupils are especially successful in obtaining the top grades at GCSE and A level. In music and mathematics, some follow an accelerated GCSE course and take the examinations in these subjects a year early with excellent results. For the last two years, a few sixth form pupils have elected to complete an EPQ and, in 2019, some achieved the highest grade. As pupils leave school, they are highly successful in obtaining places on the higher education courses of their choice, most going to British universities. A few go on to apprenticeships and those with particular talents in music and art obtain places at conservatoires and specialist music or art colleges.

- 3.11 Pupils' communication skills are at a high level and their speaking and listening skills are a strength of the school, underpinning their successes in academic, sporting and cultural activities. Pupils enter the school from a wide range of backgrounds and almost all develop confident, articulate speaking skills in English and modern foreign languages (MFL): excellent examples were seen in a drama rehearsal for *Macbeth* and in a sixth form German lesson where pupils listened to an extract on refugees before analysing it and discussing their responses. Pupils' pronunciation in MFL is excellent, informed and modelled by teachers who are native speakers. Pupils with EAL make rapid progress in their spoken English in their boarding houses and activities, as they are asked to use English in public areas, such as the dining room, to increase their fluency. All pupils are encouraged to speak well in public, and, whether in class or inter-school debating, whole school assembly or giving a talk in the cathedral, the standard of public speaking is exceptionally high. Pupils are excellent listeners, attentive in class and when listening to their peers. School is a friendly and open community and even the shyest of pupils quickly develops their confidence in talking to teachers, visitors and pupils of all ages and backgrounds. Pupils read widely and are confident when interpreting challenging texts in English. In the sixth form, pupils demonstrated sophisticated writing skills in a comparative analysis of power and gender in Chaucer and Ibsen, and, in an after-school writing club, pupils successfully devised compelling opening sentences to their short stories on urban myths, effectively blending the writer's craft with imaginative description.
- 3.12 Pupils have excellent numeracy skills and their work is accurate since they are encouraged to present their work well and to make their processes clear, so developing their logical thinking. Pupils apply these skills effectively across other areas of the curriculum such as the sciences, geography, DT and economics. Older pupils confidently calculated likely budgets for their student lives and the tax implications of their first employment and, in geography, effectively plotted data about a predicted hurricane in order to monitor its effect. Most pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) skills confidently and employ them effectively in their work and extra-curricular activities such as for sports analytics. ICT is well embedded into school practice and groups of younger pupils attending an English workshop on *An Inspector Calls*, scanned their work onto the school's online resource platform so that all could share the results. In DT older pupils were knowledgeable about the uses of ICT in design and used it adeptly for their A-level projects.
- 3.13 Pupils enjoy and are successful in a wide range of activities outside the classroom. Many join the school's Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and some achieve non-commissioned officer status whilst at school. Every year pupils are successful in The Duke of Edinburgh's (DofE) Award scheme; in 2018 to 2019, thirty-one pupils achieved their bronze award, nine their silver and two achieved gold. Sports teams excel; in 2019 the girls' U15A hockey eleven was unbeaten all season and the boys' U15 cricket eleven won a county award. Pupils from the school play at county and national level and individuals achieve success nationally in athletic events. Pupils do well in national subject competitions for mathematics, economics and science with some outstanding individual successes.
- 3.14 Pupils achieve highly in the performing arts. A large number of pupils take part in drama productions and musical concerts and the standard of group and individual performance is high. Much of the technical side of putting on a large production is managed by pupils who are responsible for the sound and lighting. A number of pupils enter external national speech and drama examinations each year with the majority attaining the higher grades.

## The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.15 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.16 Pupils have an excellent understanding of themselves; they are quietly self-confident and have a realistic appreciation of their own strengths and weaknesses. Pupils say their confidence has grown steadily at school because pastoral staff are supportive, know them well and give them individual advice and help. Pupils with SEND said they have overcome a range of problems and that talking with their teachers has enabled them to understand and moderate their behaviour or to develop their love of reading by using strategies to cope with dyslexia. Pupils are resilient as they develop their knowledge and skills. For instance, musicians explained how making mistakes when performing under pressure has helped them to improve whilst pupils in lower sets in GCSE mathematics worked with commitment and good humour to understand their mistakes and correct them. Many pupils feel they have developed self-discipline in extra-curricular activities such as the CCF, where cleaning their own kit is an essential discipline, and pupils working on the technical side of theatre productions feel the responsibility of having everything in place before the performance starts.
- 3.17 Pupils are strongly aware that they are morally responsible for their own actions and behaviour. In RS they discussed in depth the moral issues underlying international situations such as the whistleblowing that leaked classified information from the National Security Agency in 2013. In PSHE, younger pupils considered thoughtfully what their own behaviour might be in prospective relationships in the light of what they had observed in their own lives and in media representations. Pupils mostly respect and adhere to the school rules and are equally conscious of the rules and laws that underpin society. They accept that sanctions and consequences follow the breaking of these rules and some say they found the crime and punishment module in their RS GCSE course helpful and that the Christian ethos of the school informs their approach to everyday life. There is a strong emphasis on courtesy even in small things such as replying to staff emails politely and punctually or listening attentively to a pupil performance in assembly. These everyday courtesies encourage the good behaviour and harmonious relationships which are prevalent within the school.
- 3.18 Their strong sense of personal responsibility enables pupils to make appropriate decisions about their futures. They have many opportunities to decide things for themselves whilst at school; boarders make menu choices for dinner and choose trips and activities for their house. Many pupils opt for extra activities such as speech and drama to improve their speaking skills, or CCF and DofE where they are given responsibility for their own decisions and those of their team. In their academic studies, pupils choose their subject options for GCSE and A level knowing that the school will try to accommodate their selections. They seek subject and careers advice from their teachers and research independently using a wide range of resources and talking to professionals in their chosen fields, to help them make informed decisions about the next steps when leaving school.
- 3.19 Pupils work effectively with others to solve problems and achieve common goals. Many belong to school sports teams where tactical awareness and team play are essential. Pupils work successfully together for charity, organising events in school to raise money. Many pupils are involved in whole school events such as drama productions and musical concerts where cooperation and teamwork are essential for the smooth running of the performance. Pupils' social skills are excellent as a result of the school's emphasis on politeness and friendliness. They quickly build friendships with pupils of different ages through the peer mentoring scheme. The school leadership's practice of inviting pupils to have lunch with guest speakers, governors and the principal ensures that pupils talk naturally to visitors.

- 3.20 Pupils contribute generously to their school and their local community. They readily accept leadership positions on the school council, in sports teams and the CCF and are keen to act as prefects and house leaders. Older pupils train as peer mentors and, in boarding houses, act as role models and guides to younger boarders so fulfilling the school's aim to be a nurturing community. Pupils have recently formed their own eco-council to consider green initiatives for the school. Friday afternoons are given over to a range of activities and some pupils choose to give their time in the local community, visiting elderly residents to chat and play board games and offering help with gardening and other useful tasks. Pupils working towards the service element of their DofE work in local care homes and the school's theatre group tours local schools. At Christmas, choirs sing carols in nearby hospices and residential homes for the elderly.
- 3.21 Pupils have a clear idea of how to stay safe and healthy. They appreciate that the school's curriculum ensures all pupils, including those in the sixth form, have games or physical education lessons on their timetable and that the nature of the campus ensures that everyone walks regularly to get around the school. Almost all parents and most pupils who responded to the questionnaire believe that the school keeps its pupils safe. Pupils know what to do if they are concerned or worried for themselves or for a friend as they trust staff to help and know that they have a school counsellor should they need to talk further. They say they have learned about physical and mental health issues in PSHE and try to maintain a good balance between work and extra-curricular activities, such as sport and music, that help them relax. Pupils know about healthy eating and a few were critical of the school's shop which sells snacks and drinks but allowed that the food provided in the school dining room does offer a healthier option.
- 3.22 Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures and display a natural respect for each other. They are genuinely appreciative of others and the harmonious and friendly atmosphere throughout the school transcends any differences. Pupils appreciate the Christian foundation of the school but welcome the emphasis on tolerance and acceptance of other faiths and cultures in their RS and PSHE lessons, and in the cathedral talks. They enjoy exploring the different cultures represented in their school and pupils from outside the United Kingdom are encouraged to share their cultures, such as when German pupils helped singers with their pronunciation for a performance of Brahms's German Requiem.
- 3.23 Pupils respond positively to the opportunities in school and in the cathedral to think more deeply about life. Older boarders say that they appreciate the chance that boarding gives them to discuss moral and religious issues with pupils from very different cultural backgrounds. Pupils are reflective. This was seen in the high quality of their English A-level work on World War I where their responses to the suffering of the soldiers were balanced and yet personal, and in philosophy, where pupils critically assessed the arguments for the existence of God. Pupils take time to think in a quiet corner of the campus or in the creative atmosphere of the art room and many cited the Remembrance Day service in the cathedral as a particularly powerful and moving event. They respond with appreciation to the many opportunities to enjoy music, whether they are singing hymns in the cathedral or singing *Jerusalem* together at the end of a sports tour. Pupils respond to the school's unique ethos modelled for them by the school's leaders and governors, and they develop an excellent spiritual understanding during their time at school. Whether they have a faith or not, pupils say there is something special about the cathedral services and grow to appreciate the time they spend there and the history that surrounds them.

## 4. Inspection Evidence

4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair and other governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings, chapel and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mrs Catherine Williamson	Reporting inspector
Mr Sean Lambert	Compliance team inspector (Head of classics, HMC school)
Mrs Jo-Anne Duncan	Team inspector for boarding (Headmistress, GSA school)
Mr David Fotheringham	Team inspector (Former deputy head, HMC school)